

Fiddlers ready to take a bow

It'll be "rock and reel" - and plenty of jigs and hornpipes as well - as dozens of fiddlers take the stage for a battle of the bows in the Olde Tyme Fiddlers Contest at the Cypress Centre on Saturday, July 26.

Run jointly by the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Co. and the City of Medicine Hat, the contest offers fierce musical combat in a vein that's strictly traditional; if you're into swing, Cajun or southern fiddle music or the blues, you need not apply.

"Numbers chosen must be traditional Canadian," warns the pamphlet on the contest. It specifies that each contestant must offer a compulsory waltz, and one other selection, either a reel or hornpipe or jig, or a combination of the above if the progression is non-stop.

Last year 28 fiddlers took up the challenge, rosinning up their bows and tuning up their fiddles to compete in seven different classes.

Although the number of classes is going down, from seven to six, the number of contestants will probably go up if the enthusiasm and vigor displayed at last year's contest is any indication.

"Everybody was really into it. I

had people phoning all year long to ask about it," says organizer Terry Kambeitz, program leader for culture with the city.

Classes offered this year include the Junior Junior, for contestants 12 and under, the Junior category, for those between 12 and 18, the Senior class, for those above 65, and the Open, for anyone of any age.

The Junior Junior class attracted contestants as young as five.

Kambeitz says organizers expect more contestants this year, since prize money offered has been doubled. "We're hoping also to double the number of entrants," she says.

The Championship is open to all comers. The winner of the first-place prize in the Championship category will take home \$500, with the second-place finisher netting \$250, and the third-place player receiving \$150.

Prizes range from \$50 to \$125 in the Junior Junior, \$50 to \$150 for the Juniors, and \$75 to \$200 in the Senior.

Kambeitz says entrance fees have also been doubled. But she does not expect the hike to discourage people from entering, since the total fee still only amounts to \$5.

Sharland heads Miss Rodeo board

ANGELA STUBBS
Of The News

Laurie Sharland has been named chairman of the Miss Rodeo Canada board of directors.

"All I was going to do was sit on the board and learn, but they had an election and I was elected chairman of the board," she says with a chuckle.

Sharland has co-ordinated

the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede queen contest for the past 16 years. So, when Ralph Murray asked her if she'd sit on the board she agreed because she has seen two area women through the pageant, (Susan Hargrave and Shellie Sodero, who won the title) and wanted to see some changes made.

Those changes are already taking place.

"We've structured a whole new board. We now have 12 members with representation, for the first time, from every part of the province. They're excellent people. Two are from this area, Anne Lehr and Agnes Biffart."

The board has implemented a new set of policies and rules and is trying to set up a program that will go out to every fair and stampede board, outlining the criteria on how to prepare a girl to run for the Miss Rodeo Canada pageant.

The horsemanship section has been moved from the outlying district into a donated arena in the city which makes it much easier for the contestants. The Alberta Quarter Horse Association is working in conjunction with Miss Rodeo Canada and will provide horses for the competition and the introduction at the Canadian finals.

There will not be eliminations in the first three days as in the past. Sharland says board members felt three days was not enough time for the judges to get to know the girls.

The board is working hard on honorary donors so they can get a permanent scholarship for Miss Rodeo Canada.

"Girls like Shellie give up a year of their life to promote rodeo, the rodeo association and her home town, so when she's finished her year there'll be money available. If I accomplish this I'll feel I've accomplished something."

Honorary patrons making a cash donation on an annual basis to the pageant will have their names printed on the Miss Rodeo Canada letterhead and they will be invited to attend all the festivities, particularly the rodeo finals and crowning.

Sharland and Mary Ann Stoney from Calgary will co-ordinate the pageant, while Brian Ehman from near Millet will be in charge of horsemanship.

Other changes taking place include trying to establish a better relationship with parents of contestants so they don't feel left out. A new committee has also been formed to make sure sponsors and donors are never overlooked.

"The reigning Miss Rodeo Canada will do articles for the Canadian Rodeo News keeping everyone updated on her year."

Added to the pageant agenda will be a mother-daughter luncheon, two fashion shows at the West Edmonton Mall, East Texas style dance lessons, a six-pack party for all rodeo fans who take in all six performances of the rodeo, and a hockey game between special children and contestants both from the pageant and the rodeo.

"A lot of the things will be open to the public which weren't before including the sponsors' alumnae dinner on the Friday evening of the Canadian rodeo finals."

"The Miss Rodeo Canada contest is open to all young ladies who are sponsored by their own rodeo association, 4-H club or service club, but they must come in with a sponsor and the \$300 entry fee."

The contest takes place in November.

Meanwhile, Sharland will be co-ordinating Medicine Hat's Stampede Queen contest which takes place July 7 to 10 inclusive and July 14 to 19 inclusive.



Co-ordinator of the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede queen contest, Laurie Sharland has been selected as chairman of the Miss Rodeo Canada Board.

—News photo Frank Webber

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